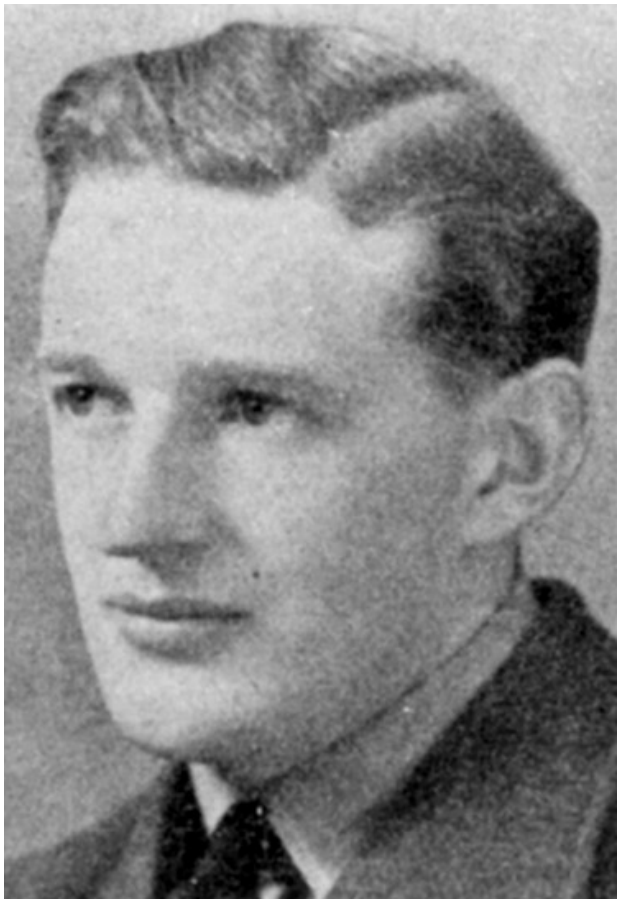
Sgt Ian Overheu DFM 40727 RNZAF



Ian was born on 28 July 1917 in Geraldton, Perth, Australia, the son of Frederick Charles Overheu and Florence Margaret Overheu nee Bond. In 1941 he married Peggy Yvonne Shelton in Peterborough, Cambridgeshire. Their son was born after his death.

Educated at St Joseph's Boarding School and the Christian Brother's High School, Perth, Western Australia, Ian was employed as a machine fitter. At the time of his enlistment he was working in New Zealand.

Training in New Zealand, in July 1940 he was awarded his Observer badge and posted to the UK the following month. In February 1941 Ian and his crew were posted to 21 Sqn at RAF Watton, Norfolk.

In April 1941 Ian's crew was one of 5 squadron crews detached to Malta, returning the following month. In April 1941 Ian, together with his Pilot, was awarded the DFM. Their citation read:

"In April, 1941, Sgt Leavers and Sgt Overheu were the pilot and observer respectively in an aircraft which participated in an attack on a large enemy convoy. In the face of heavy anti-aircraft fire, Sgt Leavers displayed great determination and tactical ability which enabled Sgt Overheu to score two direct hits on a large ship. In March 1941, these airmen successfully attacked an enemy destroyer which was escorting a convoy of some 13 ships. Pressing home his attack from an extremely low level, Sgt Leavers machine gunned the deck while Sgt Overheu scored two direct hits on the destroyer with his bombs. These airmen have completed many operational missions and both have displayed outstanding team work, together with great courage and determination".

A detachment to RAF Lossiemouth, Scotland followed at the beginning of June. Their next flight from RAF Watton would be their last.

On 16 June 1941, 6 Blenheims from 21 Sqn were allocated to carry out a daylight attack on shipping off the East Frisian Islands. At 13:19 Ian, operating as the Observer, and the crew departed RAF Watton, Norfolk in Blenheim IV V6034 (YH-D) as number 2 in a three ship. The formation flew out over the North Sea and after one hour's search, a small patrol vessel was spotted and they prepared to attack. This vessel was a "Squealer", a small patrol vessels with radio transmitters used as an early warning screen to spot the Blenheims well before the convoys were reached.

Flying in as the second attack aircraft, the crew bombed the vessel, but the wing tip struck the mast of the ship and the aircraft cartwheeled into the sea, killing all on board. This was his 28th op.

Also Killed: FS Evered Arthur Reginald Rex Leavers DFM (Pilot); Sgt Joseph William Howell Phelps (WOp/AG)

Ian has no known grave and is commemorated on the Runnymede Memorial, Surrey

Ian is commemorated on Wall Panel 221

Photo Source: www.aucklandmuseum.com